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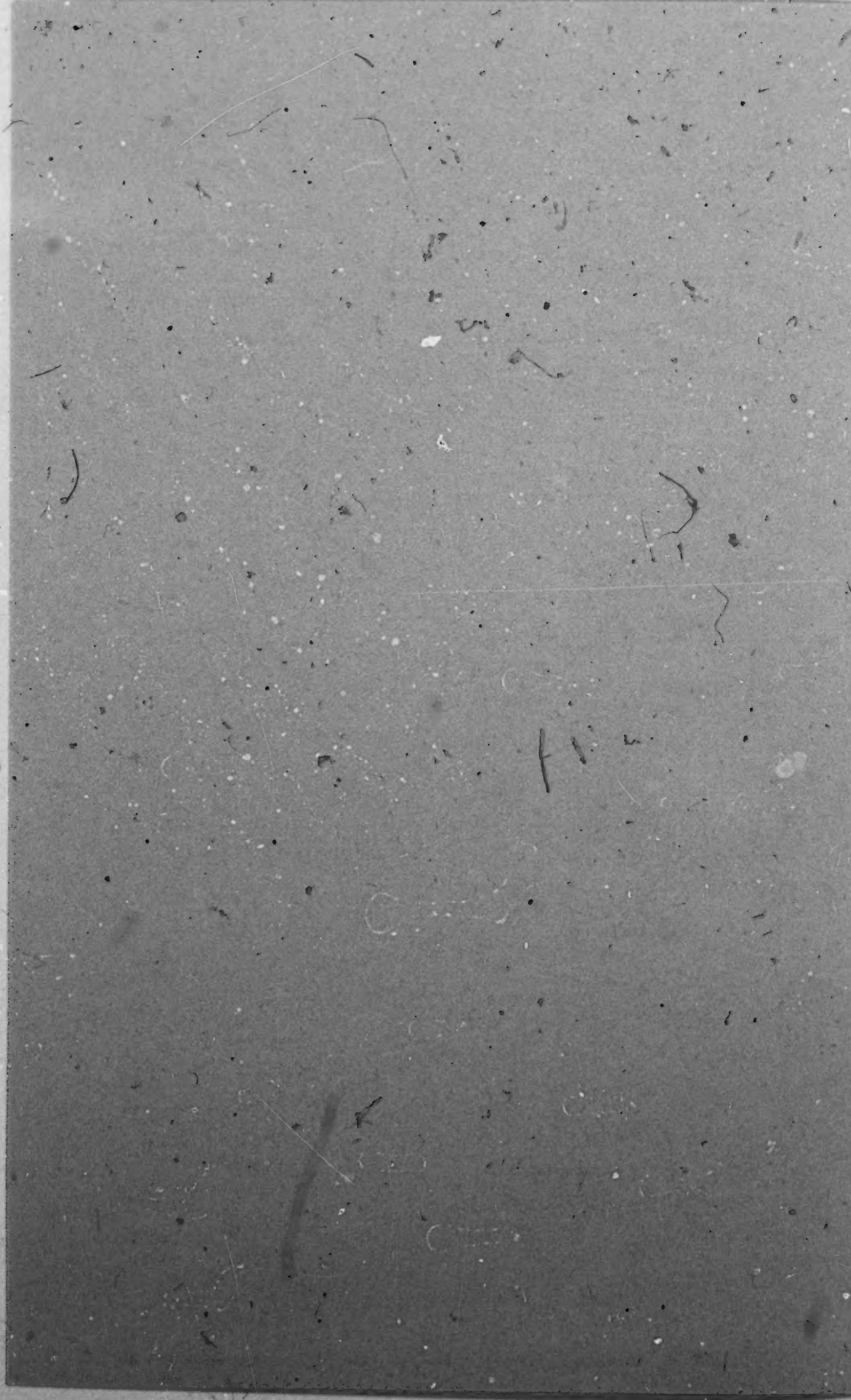
THE ARTS COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN

ART FOR ALL

AN EXHIBITION OF POSTERS & THEIR ORIGINALS

PRODUCED BY LONDON TRANSPORT 1908-1949

4 ST JAMES SQUARE · LONDON SW1



INTRODUCTION

The paintings in this exhibition range over forty eventful years that include two world wars and unparalleled social and economic changes. The visitor who is as much interested in contemporary history as in art can trace through these pictures an indirect commentary on the London way of life. The clown-humour of the Hassall posters that made the Londoner smile in 1908 can be compared with the gentle satire of Rex Whistler in 1928, with Betty Swanwick's gay distortions in 1938 or the animal parodies of Shafig Shawki in 1948. The visitor who is more interested in painting can watch the changing fashion in art, for the poster, with its directness and vigour, reflects instantly the light from a new school or a new movement.

But whatever may be the preoccupation of the visitor he will be conscious that, at first tentatively and then with increasing authority, some unifying spirit has been at work. He will find that what may at first appear a bewildering miscellany of pictures does possess both cohesion and continuity. The exhibition has an identity.

This may seem easily explained either on the ground that the pictures were all designed for transport in one way or another or because many of them were commissioned through the agency of one man—the late Frank Pick, who, however his opinions might be influenced and changed by contemporary ideas, could retain his own deeply rooted critical sense. But the feeling of identity goes deeper than that of a general purpose behind the paintings, and deeper than what might be described as the personality of a private collector. What the visitors become aware of in these forty years of painting is the emergence of a tradition.

This tradition has two important features. The first is an insistence on quality—that irrespective of style, technique or purpose the art should be good art. The second is that although the majority of the paintings should be pleasantly acceptable to the

man in the street, the revolutionary in art should also be given an opportunity of demonstrating his new beliefs.

To Frank Pick must be ascribed the bold theory that good art is good business—that to insist on the best in posters as well as in architecture, or mechanical engineering, is not only to give the public their just entitlement but to win a rich dividend in the goodwill of the passenger and in pride of service.

The pictures shown are a selection from the originals of the many hundreds of posters published by the Underground group of companies and by London Transport. They were chosen in the light of two sometimes conflicting requirements —first, that they should be good in themselves, good art and representative of the artist; second, that they should be true to their date and representative of their period. But if the exhibition is to show both the development of a tradition and the development of poster art during these forty years then it is clear that both requirements cannot be made absolute. Some paintings, then, are included largely on their merit as art, some because they are needed to show an advance in technique. And it is equally clear that if the illustration of the two developments was to be fair, the work of as many different artists as possible should be included. It would, for example, have been possible to show many more paintings by McKnight Kauffer or Fred Taylor, but this would have meant either sacrificing the work of other artists or of making the exhibition unwieldy and unbalanced.

One other and more controversial principle of selection was adopted: to confine the paintings to pictorial art and to reserve, perhaps for another exhibition, all the work in that field called, for want of a better term, commercial art—announcements of traffic changes, railway extensions and the like.

The paintings shown were published as posters, and because they were commissioned with this in mind the printed poster is often as interesting as the original. For this reason the companion posters are displayed as well as the originals. The student of printing is able to observe technical developments, the student of lettering can see the changing fashions in typo-

graphy, the student of advertising can note how a painting became a poster.

The 'Art for All' exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum, from which the present exhibition has been selected, was the first of its kind—these original paintings have hitherto only been seen in the offices at 55 Broadway, or have been hidden away in London Transport's archives. The pictures will eventually be distributed throughout London Transport's offices and canteens, and they will be moved round every six months.

This exhibition is only one part, the most spectacular part, of a tradition of good design which London Transport applies to all its activities—to tiles and press advertisements, to mechanical engineering and bus-stop posts, to time-tables and to station names.

The whole exhibition, however, is more than a retrospect. In 1948 London Transport became a part of the national transport system. This exhibition shows the tradition that the London Transport Executive inherits and the inspiration with which it sets out into the future.

HAROLD F. HUTCHISON

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Arts Council welcomes this opportunity of circulating a selection from the comprehensive exhibition of posters, *Art for All*, recently held at the Victoria & Albert Museum. To the London Transport Executive and its Publicity Officer, Mr Harold F. Hutchison, thanks are due for their share of the arrangements and for the loan of the posters and the majority of the originals. Seven of the originals (Nos. 10, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21 and 22) are kindly lent by the Victoria & Albert Museum whose Director, Sir Leigh Ashton, has assisted in the selection of the material here shown.

LONDON TRANSPORT
POSTERS
AND THEIR ORIGINALS

The catalogue number indicates the artist's design and the letter A the poster itself

ON THE WALLS

1908

1 & 1A	'NO NEED TO ASK A P'LICEMAN'	John Hassall
2 & 2A	HAMPSTEAD FAIR	Fred Taylor

1913

3 & 3A	'WHEN IN DOUBT . . .'	John Hassall
4	THE WORKERS' WAY (*autolithograph*)	Spencer Pryse
5	THE WAY OF BUSINESS (*autolithograph*)	Sir Frank Brangwyn, RA

1914

6 & 6A	FLYING AT HENDON	Tony Sarg
7 & 7A	CHIGWELL	Fred Taylor

1917

8 THE LAND OF NOD (*autolithograph*)
Charles Sims, RA

This was a 'pin-up' of the First World War to remind the Tommies of home.

9 THE VILLAGE CHURCH (*autolithograph*)
Sir George Clausen, RA

Another reminder to the fighting men of 1914–18.

1919

10 & 10A UXBRIDGE — E. McKnight Kauffer

1921

11 & 11A KINGSTON — Charles Paine

1922

12 PICTORIAL MAP OF LONDON — McDonald Gill

This is the first black plate which was tinted by the artist to instruct the lithographer as to colour.

13 & 13A LONDON MUSEUM — E. McKnight Kauffer

1923

14 THE HEART OF THE EMPIRE — Fred Taylor

An aerial reconstruction done without the aid of aerial photography, at the time when the Empire Exhibition at Wembley was in mind.

15 & 15A CHRISTMAS PLAYS — Albert Rutherston

Besides decorating stations, this poster was sold to the public for cutting up to form a toy theatre.

1924

16 & 16A TWICKENHAM — E. McKnight Kauffer

17 & 17A WINTER SALES — E. McKnight Kauffer

18 & 18A COLNE RIVER — E. McKnight Kauffer

19 SPRING ON WIMBLEDON COMMON — Philip Connard, RA

The poster made from this picture carried this title as its simple caption.

1924

20 & 20A LONDON PARKS — J. H. Dowd

1925

21 & 21A CHANGING THE GUARD — Edward Bawden, ARA

1927

22 & 22A CHINGFORD — Gregory Brown

1928

23 & 23A VIRGINIA WATER — John Mansbridge
24 & 24A WINDSOR CASTLE — Clive Gardiner
25 & 25A LEPIDOPTERA — Austin Cooper

ON THE STANDS

STAND I

1928

26 & 26A THE TATE GALLERY — Rex Whistler

1929

27 & 27A BEACONSFIELD — H. S. Williamson

1932

28 & 28A DOWNLAND — Clifford and Rosemary Ellis
29 & 29A WILLOWS — E. McKnight Kauffer

1936

30 & 30A MODEL OF A CUBIC SURFACE — Edward Wadsworth, ARA

STAND II

1936

31 & 31A 'HOW SWEET I ROAMED . . . '	Graham Sutherland
32 & 32A '. . . FROM FIELD TO FIELD'	Graham Sutherland
33 & 33A KEW GARDENS	Edward Bawden, ARA
34 & 34A COUNTRY HOUSES	Edward Bawden, ARA
35 & 35A REGENT'S PARK	Edward Bawden, ARA

STAND III

1936

36 & 36A CIRCUS	Barnett Freedman

1937

37 & 37A REGENT'S PARK	Frank Ormrod
38 & 38A VARIETY	James Fitton, ARA
39 & 39A HAMPTON COURT	Oleg Zinger

1938

40 & 40A WEDDING	Betty Swanwick

STAND IV

1938

41 & 41A LAMBING	Clare Leighton
42 & 42A OUT AND ABOUT	Dora Batty
43 & 43A WOODS	E. McKnight Kauffer
44 & 44A 'NOW HE'S AT THE ZOO'	John Barker
45 & 45A RICHMOND PARK	Dame Laura Knight, RA

STAND V

1939

46 & 46A LEISURE — Margaret Barnard

1944

47 & 47A WOMAN PORTER — Eric Kennington

1948

48 & 48A THE ZOO — Shafig Shawki

1949

49 & 49A MUSEUMS — Anthony Gilbert
50 & 50A THE RIVER — Betty Swanwick

51 & 52 Examples of colour prints of posters which can be obtained from the Publicity Office, London Transport Executive, price 1s each

PRINTS

of London Transport Posters

Prints of eighteen famous posters are now on sale at the Publicity Office, 55 Broadway, Westminster, London SW1 (St James's Park Station). (See examples in frames 51 and 52)

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